



Texas Department of Agriculture

Workforce Plan

Fiscal Years 2009 – 2013

Texas Department of Agriculture

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I. Agency Overview

A. Agency Mission

Partner with all Texans to make Texas the nation's leader in agriculture, fortify our economy, empower rural communities, promote healthy lifestyles and cultivate winning strategies for rural, suburban and urban Texas through exceptional service and the common threads of agriculture in our daily lives.

B. Agency Business Operations

The Texas Department of Agriculture (TDA) was created in 1887 as a part of the Department of Agriculture, Statistics and History. In 1907, the Department became a separate state agency charged with “promoting Texas agriculture interests through organizing farmer’s institutes over the state.” Since 1907, the Texas Department of Agriculture has been mandated by the Legislature to be a full-service agency, involved with all phases of modern agriculture, agricultural businesses and consumer protection. Today its vital functions include regulatory activities, marketing, producer outreach, agricultural resource protection, agricultural research, economic analysis and promoting excellence in adult and children nutrition.

TDA finds new markets for value-added products, protects the public and the environment and enforces laws that maintain consumer confidence in the market place primarily through programs implemented by Regulatory Programs, Marketing and Promotion, Pesticide Programs, Rural Economic Development, Food and Nutrition and Field Operations.

The agency is organized into Executive Administration, including Internal Audit, External Relations and the Texas Cooperative Inspection Program (TCIP); five program areas (Regulatory, Marketing and Promotion, Pesticide, Food and Nutrition and Rural Economic Development), five regional offices (Lubbock, Dallas, Houston, San Antonio and San Juan), 22 sub-offices and laboratories (Abilene, Amarillo, Austin [2], Corpus Christi, El Paso, Ft. Worth, Houston, Lubbock [3], Lufkin, Paris, Pharr, San Angelo, San Antonio, Tyler [2], Stephenville, Giddings [2], and College Station) Administrative Services, Financial Services, Communications, External Relations, and General Counsel.

II. Current Workforce Profile

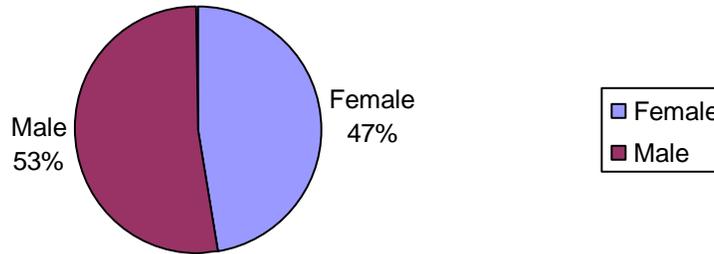
A. Workforce Demographics

The following charts profile TDA’s full-time and part-time workforce, based on data from the Uniform Statewide Payroll/Personnel System (USPS).

Gender

During Fiscal Year 2007, TDA had 593 employees on the payroll at varying times of whom 312 were male (52.6%) and 281 were female (47.4%). This total includes both full-time and part-time employees.

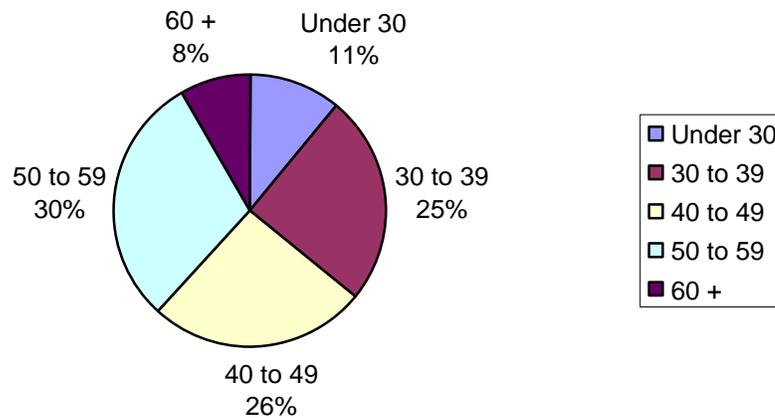
Workforce by Gender



Age

As of March 31, 2008, more than 64% of TDA's current employees are age 40 or older. With less than 36% of the agency's workforce under 40 years old, TDA must aggressively plan how to replace the knowledge of the 209 employees who are eligible to retire before the end of FY 2013 or are return-to-work retirees.

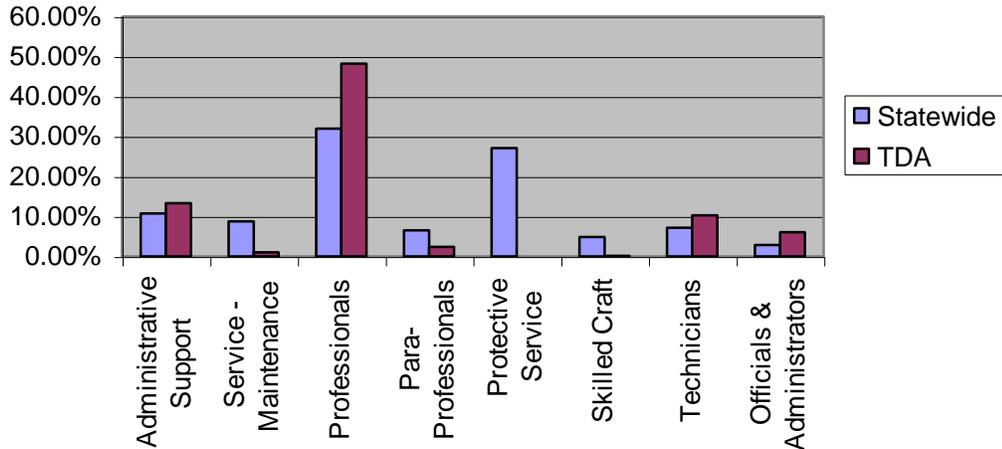
Workforce by Age



Diversity

The following table compares TDA’s ethnicity and gender percentages for 2006 to the state civilian workforce as reported by the Texas Workforce Commission Civil Rights Division¹.

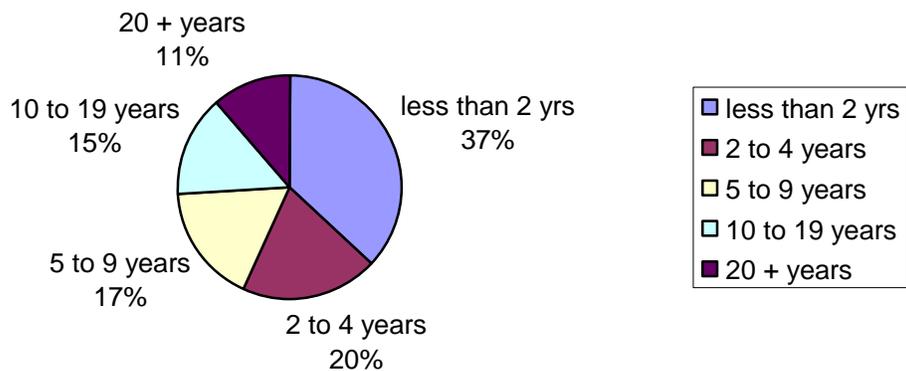
2006 EEO Comparison



Tenure

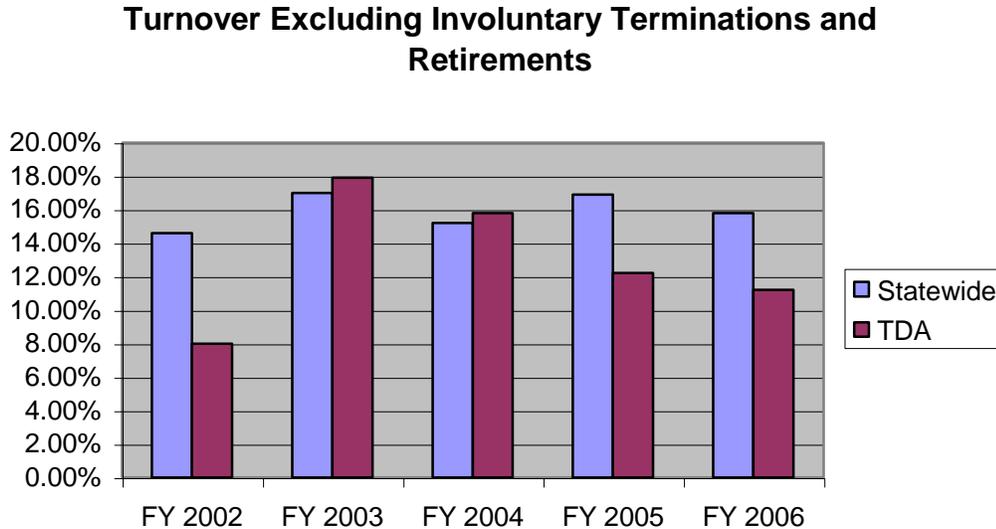
Of the 593 employees, as of March 31, 2008, 219 employees (36.93%) have less than two years of agency service and 119 employees (20.07%) have less than five years of service. There were 101 employees (17.03%) with five to nine years of service, 87 employees (14.67%) with ten to 19 years of service and 67 employees (11.3%) with 20 or more years of service. It should be noted that the majority of the employees with less than two years of agency service are due to legislative transfers that occurred in September and October of 2007.

Workforce by Agency Tenure



B. Employee Turnover and Projected Attrition

The Texas Department of Agriculture's turnover rate for FY 2007 was 12.82%. The following chart depicts TDA's turnover data for Fiscal Years 2002 – 2006 compared to the state employee workforce as a whole².



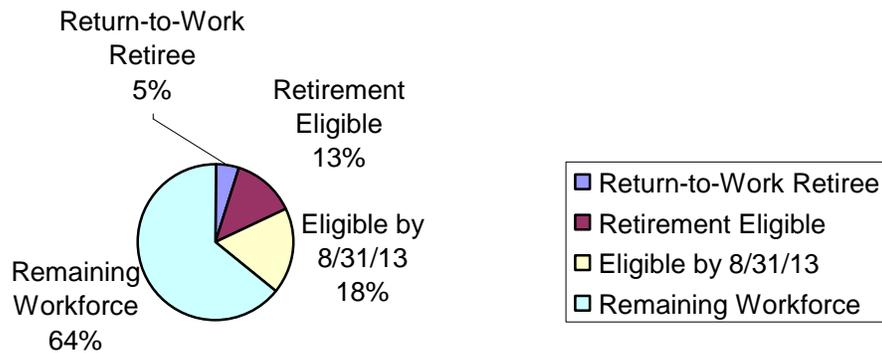
According to information obtained through the State Auditor's Office's (SAO) Exit Interview, inadequate salary is the primary reason employees leave the agency. Many leave to pursue higher compensation with other state agencies and in the private sector.

The highest percentage of turnover occurs among employees in the Inspector and Program Specialist series, who make up the majority of the TDA workforce.

Because TDA is a mature agency (with over 64% of its employees over the age of 40 including 38% over the age of 50), retirements will have a big impact on the agency over the next five years. This could result in the loss of important institutional knowledge and expertise. It is important to minimize the loss of critical program knowledge and organizational experience with departing employees.

Using the Employees' Retirement System's (ERS) retirement projections, it is estimated that 181 TDA employees will retire by the end of FY 2013. This would result in 30.52% percent of the agency's employees retiring by the end of Fiscal Year 2013. This is in addition to the 28 (4.72%) return-to-work retirees currently employed with TDA.

Projected Retirements



C. Critical Workforce Skills

TDA employs qualified individuals in numerous program disciplines. Strong employee competencies are critical to meet ongoing business objectives and goals. Skills are needed in the following substantive areas in order for TDA to accomplish its basic business functions:

- Regulatory and consumer protection;
- Legal services;
- Information resources;
- Adult and child nutrition;
- Rural economic development; and
- Business development and marketing.

TDA employees also need the following skills to succeed:

- Technology/computer skills;
- Customer service;
- Research and analysis;
- Financial management;
- Data and information management;
- Performance management;
- Strategic planning;
- Staff hiring, development, retention and management;
- Mentoring and coaching;
- Critical thinking; and
- Leadership and management skills.

The following business areas are most at risk for loss of skills and institutional knowledge:

- Regulatory programs;
- Pesticide programs;
- Legal services;
- Metrology;
- Regional operations;
- Information resources; and
- Financial services.

III. Future Workforce Profile

A. Expected Workforce Changes

As a result of increasing public demands in the areas of adult and child nutrition, consumer protection and additional programs given to TDA last legislative session, it is expected that a greater distribution of agency resources will be directed to these areas in the future. Additional resources will be required to address these demands:

- Staffing and service adjustments due to the addition of the Special Nutrition Programs transferred from the Health and Human Services Commission and the legislative transfer of the Structural Pest Control Board;
- Increase in monitoring, reviewing and physically inspecting businesses regulated by TDA;
- Increased field presence to improve regulatory functions;
- Increased emphasis on the use of technology to serve customers and to revise and streamline work processes to make them more efficient;
- Increased workload in administrative and financial support functions;
- An aging workforce;
- Increased diversity in employee demographics, backgrounds, experiences and other characteristics;
- Periodic difficulty in attracting and retaining qualified employees in certain positions due to fluctuations and cycles in the labor market, especially in terms of the impact of private sector business cycles;
- Closing of smaller field offices and relocation staff to shared office space; and
- Periodic reorganizations to realign resources to achieve agency goals.

B. Anticipated Change in Number of Employees Needed

TDA may need additional FTEs in order to manage the increase in programs. Otherwise, increased workload demands will be addressed by the reallocation of FTEs within the agency. Any decrease in staffing would significantly impact TDA's ability to meet its goals. Increased and changing demands will be facilitated by technology and streamlining of processes.

C. Critical Functions

The Texas Department of Agriculture's critical functions are:

- Marketing Texas products, communities, and businesses;
- Nutrition program administration;
- Regulatory and consumer protection;
- Rural economic development; and
- Various grant programs.

To successfully complete these critical functions, TDA relies on a strong set of support areas with expertise in areas such as:

- Administrative Services;
- Communications;
- External relations;
- Financial services; and
- Internal Audit.

D. Future Workforce Skills Needed

The critical workforce skills needed to fulfill TDA's mission include:

- Technology/computer skills;
- Customer service;
- Research and analysis;
- Financial management;
- Data and information management;
- Performance management;
- Strategic planning;
- Staff hiring, development, retention and management;
- Mentoring and coaching;
- Critical thinking; and
- Leadership and management skills.

Future functions to accomplish TDA's mission and goals will include the following:

- Increase computer skill sets for employees;
- Increase and maintain high levels of customer service skills by maximizing electronic records and minimizing paper records;
- Create and implement a comprehensive training program as part of the Human Resources' partnership with agency divisions and management; and
- Enhance and promote a comprehensive internship program.

IV. Gap Analysis

A. Anticipated Worker Shortage/Surplus

With more than 36 percent of TDA's workforce being eligible for retirement by FY 2013, TDA projects a potential shortage in staffing and skill levels needed to meet future requirements. The projected shortage of qualified employees with the necessary skills and knowledge will most affect the following areas:

- Regulatory programs;
- Regional operations; and
- Pesticide programs.

Due to the increase in programs and responsibility, TDA may need additional FTEs in order to effectively manage agency goals and objectives.

B. Anticipated Skill Shortage/Surplus

TDA believes replacing projected retirements and turnovers in management will require succession planning and greater emphasis on professional development and training. With this additional professional development, TDA believes the current workforce has the majority of the skills required to replace the anticipated loss of institutional knowledge.

A significant barrier to replacing all skill sets is funding, both for professional development and training of existing employees and for recruiting employees externally.

Specifically, TDA may experience shortages of employees with the following skill sets and knowledge:

- Leadership and management;
- Thorough knowledge of laws and regulations affecting the agency;
- Valuable institutional knowledge, expertise and experience; and
- Information resources.

V. Strategy Development

A. Goals

Goals to address TDA's projected workforce gap will include the following:

- Career development programs – Programs such as mentoring, the expansion of the internship program and an increase in professional training and development for staff will be initiated throughout the agency;
- Leadership development – Efforts will be made to identify, retain and develop existing employees with management and leadership capabilities. This will require the funding to identify and increase leadership training;
- Organizational training and development – Funding for in-house training such as managerial training and skill development will be needed to address individual employee training needs for the day-to-day operations of the agency; and
- Succession planning – Supervisors will be made aware of what skill sets are critical to meeting their objectives and can plan for employee attrition.

Succession planning will also address staffing or skill imbalances due to turnover and retirements.

B. Recruitment and Retention

- Recruitment plan – Recruitment efforts will focus on areas that are difficult to attract and/or retain such as metrologists, attorneys, inspectors, and the recruitment of women and minorities; and
- Retention programs – Managers will be trained regarding employee retention programs such as flex-time, staggered work hours, personal development training opportunities, on-site massage therapy and service awards.

C. Workforce Plan Evaluation and Revision

The Workforce Plan will be implemented in connection with TDA's Strategic Plan. Strategic Plan changes due to leadership or legislative changes may result in adjustment to the Workforce Plan.

Human Resources (HR) will develop a stronger business partnership with each of the divisions to determine training needs, assist with workforce strategic and succession planning. HR will provide divisions with information regarding turnover, retirement eligibility and tenure in addition to assisting in recruiting a diverse workforce.

¹ Equal Employment Opportunity and Minority Hiring Practices Report. Texas Workforce Commission Civil Rights Division. January 2007.

² Employee Turnover Statistics – Statewide Turnover Rate